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ABSTRACT

Designed to last approximately 7 days, Unit II of a 4-unit career development and life planning program for rural high school students focuses on teaching students decision making skills to enable them to exercise more control over their time and energies. The unit introduces the decision making process; provides practice in applying the process (especially to personal decisions); and presents background information about taking risks, using decision strategies, making educated decisions, and acting on decisions. The unit is organized into five color-coded lessons, each containing complete instructions for classroom activities and homework, learning objectives, detailed lesson plans, student activity sheets, and teaching tips. The unit also contains an introduction to the series; an appendix with additional teaching hints, information about group dynamics and discussions, and more student activities; and an adaptation manual with instructions for tailoring the unit to local needs. The field-tested curriculum is designed for the rural Midwest but the program contains detailed adaptation manuals for four other rural regions in the United States (the Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, and Appalachian South areas). (SB)

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OPTIONS

A CAREER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM FOR RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

DECISION MAKING

Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire

UNIT 2

CE 01 2594

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Women's Educational Equity Act Program
U. S. Education Department

OPTIONS

A Career Development Curriculum for Rural High School Students

Unit II

Decision Making

by

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PREFACE

OPTIONS: A Career Development Curriculum for Rural High School Students was developed at Dartmouth College from 1976 to 1978 under a grant from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program Staff of the U.S. Office of Education. The project staff worked with rural teachers, citizens, students, and school administrators in five regions of the United States to prepare thoroughly tested and successful course materials that deal with the particular needs of young people in rural areas. The curriculum frequently pinpoints the problems and interests of rural women, but it has been prepared to be useful and appropriate for both male and female students.

There are four units in the OPTIONS course. Unit I, "Understanding People in Our Area," focuses on life in rural localities using the personal experience of students as the basis for discussion, but supplements student observations with data to permit generalization from individual perceptions. Unit II, "Decision Making," teaches students to identify and develop certain skills that will enable them to exercise more control over their time and energies. Unit III, "Life Planning," uses case study and simulation techniques to teach students to plan their own futures and then to practice responses to problems that might stand in the way of realizing projected goals. Unit IV, "The Juggling Act," uses case studies to encourage students to apply skills developed throughout the course in solving realistic life problems.

The original curriculum, developed and field tested from 1976 to 1977, focused on the lives of people in rural New England. To broaden the application

of the curriculum and to test its adaptability, four additional sites were selected during the summer of 1977 to develop and field-test regionally adapted versions of the curriculum. The sites were chosen to represent very different rural areas of the country: Nebraska, New Mexico, Oregon, and Tennessee. In each State, a site coordinator was hired to oversee adaptation by local teachers and testing procedures for that version of the curriculum. Adaptation was completed during the fall of 1977 and the curriculums were field-tested during the winter and spring of 1978.

The OPTIONS course is now available in five versions roughly designated as appropriate for the Northeast, the Appalachian South, the Midwest, the Southwest, and the Northwest. The core OPTIONS curriculum is presented in the Midwest version. Adaptation packets for the other regional versions consist of pages with regional specific references that can be exchanged with pages in the core curriculum to adapt the course to your region. For further adaptation to the special circumstances of a particular Sate or locality, an Adaptation Manual has been included with the teacher materials. This manual outlines a step-by-step procedure for tailoring the curriculum to a particular area. The adaptation process does not require curriculum experts or complex equipment; it is intended for use by school personnel anywhere in the United States.

One final note: The OPTIONS curriculum has been designed as a coherent career development/life planning course, 9 to 12 weeks in length. But all the units and many of the lessons can be used alone or in the context of other courses. The independence of component parts has been designed into the course; teachers should be encouraged to take advantage of that feature.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people, schools, and organizations provided time and facilities for the development and testing of the OPTIONS course. The project director wishes to acknowledge gratefully the contribution of all who made this curriculum possible.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Every June, hundreds of thousands of young rural women and men graduate from high school feeling a mixture of terror and excitement as they look ahead to their future lives. Their pleasure and their fear are shared by millions of other non-college-bound graduates in cities and suburbs, but the prospects for rural young people are both more complex and less secure.

Young rural women and men must contend with a small and often shrinking job market. They must deal with the very narrow range of training opportunities available in their area. And though both sexes face these employment problems, the young rural woman must also be able to handle acute sex stereotyping at work and frequently in personal relationships. She must forge a new model for rural womanhood that differs sharply from the traditional model within which she was probably raised.

The rural woman has traditionally had a set of life roles that has been as stable as any our country has known. While circumstances in cities have changed rapidly, forcing women to change their perceptions of themselves and their families rapidly, farm life has remained quite consistent for generation after generation. The farm or ranch wife, the logger's wife, and the railroader's wife have expected to do essentially what their mothers have done before them. The essential conservatism of rural areas has done much to maintain a consistent vision of what is "appropriate" even while circumstances have changed enough to demand new responses.

Today, many young women graduate from high school with expectations for their own futures that are essentially the same as those of their mothers and grandmothers. They want to get married (although they are willing to work for a while) and they want to "live happily ever after," raising children in their own homes, and fulfilling traditional female roles in rather conventional ways.

But this vision is no longer realistic, not even in parts of the country still dominated by traditional rural occupations. One thousand farms a week go out of business in this country, the disastrous saga of mining employment patterns is too well known to need repetition, and logging has been mechanized to the detriment of stable jobs. The rural woman today is far less likely than her mother (who, in turn, is far less likely than her mother before her) to be able to fill the traditional role patterns that are generally perceived as "happily ever after." Divorce, financial pressure, a husband's unemployment -- all these push the rural woman back into the labor market, often before her children are of school age. "Happily ever after" is a myth for more than half the women in the rural Midwest; it will be even more of a myth for their daughters.

The rural high school graduate has some awareness of this trend. Our needs assessment data, drawn from questionnaires administered to 439 high school students, suggest that most young rural women know that they will probably have to work after marriage. About half think that they will need to hold a full- or part-time job after they have children, although the majority think that a woman should not work when her children are young. Asked why they will work, most say that they will need the money -- self-fulfillment is not a primary motivation.

The young men in the study have slightly different perceptions about the question of women working. Each seems to accept the fact that his wife will work, but is very unclear how he will specifically be affected by her working More than half of the men do not think that their wives will have to work for money.

This sense, that women may need to work, seems to coexist with the traditional vision of rural womanhood. The rural high school women we questioned had apparently given very little thought to what work they might do, or to how they would juggle their home responsibilities with the obligations of a job. Few of them could tell what they had to offer an employer. Most had never been through a job interview, and many thought of the prospect as alarming. Few of them felt that school courses or programs had taught anything useful in getting jobs. These young women know, at some level, that they are likely to have to make decisions, handle problems, and construct careers (in the broadest sense of that maligned term) in ways that most rural women have not had to do in the past. But they are no better prepared than their mothers or grandmothers to face what is likely to come. They say that they will probably have to work, they recognize the problems of adult relationships in the 1970's, and they have read about the concept of equal rights for women. But they plan weddings, not job-training programs, and daydream about cute babies rather than considering child-care options for the working mother.

It is also clear from boys' responses that they do not see a need to develop the very basic skills of interviewing, finding a job, decision making, and the like. It seems that although the males expect to work, they have little conception of how they will go about getting the best job they can, and even less of an idea of how a household is managed when a wife works.

None of that is unreasonable for fifteen-to-seventeen-year-old students. But if hard planning does not take place in high school, there is some danger that it will not take place at all. The social service agencies are very familiar with the plight of the young, unskilled mother who is suddenly the penniless head of a household. And the young women we questioned felt a need for a course to help them understand themselves and use this understanding to make crucial decisions about work, marriage, family, and other aspects of their future lives. Obviously boys, who also perceive themselves as working, marrying, and raising families, have these needs as well.

This curriculum is designed to address these needs. It is not a career education curriculum in the usual sense: we do not go through a series of job descriptions that would allow young people to select those best suited to their needs and interests. There are hundreds of those curriculums on the market. We have reviewed a selection of these, but their goals tend to be different from ours.

The intent of our curriculum is threefold. First, we want to <u>inform</u>. We think it is essential that young women and men learn what it means to be an adult in a rural area in the late twentieth century. All students have individual observations of life around them -- these need to be expanded or

changed so that students can predict some of the events and difficulties with which they will have to deal. Second, we want to facilitate dealing with these events. Recognizing problems and resources is not enough -- we want young women and men to identify and develop those skills that will allow them to control their lives and to cope with the aspects of life beyond their control. Third, we want to provide a structured experience that will allow these young people to apply their information and skills to realistic situations that they may face, and to test their abilities to work with situations and issues that they may need to confront later in life.

Although this curriculum focuses on women, we feel that it is critically important for young men as well. First, most of the skills we teach are important to both sexes; both women and men need to know how to make good decisions, how to plan their lives, and how to deal with a difficult job market. Second, it is crucial that young men be as aware as young women of the problems that beset family life in rural America today. As workers, they must be sensitive to the destructive influences of sex stereotyping. As husbands, they must help forge new ways of household management and child rearing in an economy that increasingly requires married women to work. Finally, we believe that this curriculum will make men and women more able to communicate with each other about problems and issues in daily life, especially in that large portion of daily life devoted to work or interpersonal relationships. No young woman, however well informed or highly skilled, can work out family problems with an unwilling male partner. However, young women and young men together, armed with the same information and skills, can begin to work out their problems. This is the central task of our curriculum.

Each unit of the curriculum contains information, skill work, and some form of confrontation with reality. Each has a different emphasis. Unit I, "Understanding People in Our Area," introduces the central problem areas adults face, using the personal observations of students as a base, supplemented with data intended to enable students to generalize from their individual perceptions. By the end of that unit, the student should have a clear sense of the difficulties both men and women in the area face and should be motivated to begin developing skills to help cope with them.

Unit II, "Decision Making," has students work on the skills most needed to address the problems discussed in the first unit. It is an expandable unit that can be tailored around individual and class needs.

Unit III, "Life Planning," asks the class to apply the skills developed in Unit II to the information collected in Unit I. This is an experience-simulation unit, intended to teach students assessment skills that are used to project their future lives and then to simulate their responses to problems that might stand in the way of self-realization. This is done primarily through a Learning Activity Package (LAP) on assessment skills and a simulation game called "The Game of Life: Choice and Chance."

Unit IV, "The Juggling Act: Lives and Careers," uses case studies to involve students in solving complex life problems. It uses the skills and information developed in the course thus far and adds others such as: being interviewed, filling out job applications, writing a resumé, dealing with sex discrimination, and dealing with family/work conflicts.

In general, the curriculum rests on several assumptions. First we believe that a knowledge of reality, even if harsh, is better than cheerful ignorance. Second, we believe that information and skills give students a degree of control over their lives, and that control is better than dependence on the whims of fate. Third, we believe that acquiring skills and practicing their application are more worthwhile career development experiences than mere exposure to a series of concrete job options. Finally, we believe, as did the young people we questioned, that young people benefit from a classroom experience of this nature.

If this curriculum is made to work, it should make both young women and young men more competent to deal with their futures than many of us were at their ages.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

The Teacher's Guide is organized by lessons. For each lesson, there is a set of instructions to the teacher about classroom activities and homework. The Teacher's Guide includes:

1. Statements of the enabling objectives for each activity (i.e., what the students will do that will enable them to attain the overall objectives of the unit).

2. A list of materials needed for the lesson.

3. A detailed lesson plan, including instructions for discussion, questions, homework assignments and explanations, and possible difficulties. Teachers may wish to add notes on the lesson plan.

4. A section called "Notes to the Teacher" that has optional activities as well as hints on how to use the materials.

5. A copy of all Student Activity Sheets (SASs).

6. An appendix that includes some additional information on running classroom discussions, working with small groups, role playing, and problem solving.

For organizational purposes, the guide is color coded. All white pages are Teacher's Guide (lesson plan) pages, and all colored pages are SASs, transcripts, student reference pages, etc. The colors of the student pages tie into references given in the lesson plans to aid you when you duplicate these pages from the ditto masters. If possible, duplicate SASs in the colors suggested to aid in tracking the various activities.

Teachers should have instruction sheets available for each lesson and should give out homework assignments and related activity sheets before the end of the class. Homework is crucial to the success of this curriculum and must be done thoroughly for each assignment to ensure the success of the following class. Homework, in most cases, can be done in class if necessary.

The only exceptions to the above-mentioned format are the instructions provided for Learning Activity Packages (LAPs) that appear as lesson #8 of Unit I and lesson #11 of Unit III. Because the general guidelines for teaching an LAP apply to both, they are described in the next section.

A word on altering the curriculum: It is our assumption that most teachers like to adapt any curriculum to the particular needs of their own students and their own styles. Please do so. This curriculum has been designed to be adaptable and to allow teachers to insert local references, to change the order of activities, and to add or replace materials--in short, to be made your own. Do not think that the fact that our lesson plans are in print means that they are sacred. You know what is best for your class. Use our materials to your best advantage.

A word on the length of lessons: We have deliberately called our division of activities "lessons" rather than "days." Different classes will begin with different levels of awareness and information; they will take different lengths of time to do the work as we have outlined it or as you have changed it. Some groups will take a single day for each lesson, others will take three days. We have included rough estimates on the length of units. Don't take these estimates too seriously. You know the reading level and sophistication of your students--your estimates are likely to be better than ours.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR LEARNING ACTIVITY PACKAGES

1. Students proceed through the readings and activities more or less at their own pace. (We'll have more to say about techniques for managing self-paced instruction later in this guide.)

2. The LAP provides instructions to students as to their tasks, how to evaluate their work, and what page to turn to next.

3. Activities in the LAP are usually of four types:

   a. Assessment -- tasks designed to determine whether the student possesses a given skill.

   b. Instruction -- tasks that teach skills a student does not possess.

   c. Evaluation -- tasks designed to determine if the student has mastered the skill via the instructional activities.

   d. Enrichment -- optional activities related to the skills being worked on but not critical to their development.

4. Teachers have four critical roles in teaching the LAPs:

   a. Monitor -- keeping students on task and working at a reasonable rate.

   b. Facilitator -- explaining any directions or activities about which students are genuinely confused.

   c. Resource -- providing students with any required or student-requested materials or information.

   d. Evaluator -- reviewing students' work when they are instructed to bring it to the teacher (specific instructions to the teacher for those instances are in this guide).

Classroom Management

Individualized instruction presents the teacher with advantages and disadvantages. At first it can be difficult if you don't have a lot of experience in using individualized methods. The following discussion is intended to assist teachers in obtaining the benefits of individualized instruction while minimizing the costs.

It is important for you to realize that you are essential in teaching an LAP. In addition to your roles as monitor, facilitator, resource person, and evaluator, your contact with students should include some or all of the following functions: 1) motivate--most important; 2) provide examples and/or analogies; 3) give a mini-lecture when appropriate; 4) pair students with similar problems; 5) trouble-shoot; 6) debrief; 7) summarize.

All the above-mentioned roles will require you to have continuous contact with students and will permit you to gain a sense of the progress being made by each individual.

Unfamiliar format will probably be your biggest problem with the LAPs. Fortunately, many high school teachers now use a lot of individualized instruction and self-paced work; for many of you, the problem will be only in adapting your normal routines to written rather than "hands-on" activities. Help the students adjust to the new format by pointing out parallels between LAPs and other classroom procedures. But also be sure that they recognize the differences between LAPs and other written work they are accustomed to--this will reduce their natural tendency to reject unfamiliar tasks.

Describe to them your four primary roles (defined on the previous page), and explain that their roles include:

1. Determining their own pace
2. Figuring out directions
3. Assessing their own skills
4. Evaluating others.

When explaining these roles, keep in mind the following points regarding students' roles:

1. Determining their own pace: Since most activities are done individually or in small groups, the rate at which students work is not determined by the teacher or the rest of the class. This does not mean that they can deliberately work at a "snail's pace" or that they can race through the activities without making an effort. You, as teacher, will be around to monitor their work and to keep them moving at a reasonable pace.

2. Understanding written directions: Students are responsible for reading the activities and understanding the instructions for what to do. They should not constantly ask you what to do next. Unfortunately, their initial response will be to do just that. To nip this tendency in the bud, you must consistently redirect students to the written instructions and ask them either to figure them out or to ask a student partner to help. Of course, there may be some instructions that are confusing and there may be students who are genuinely unable to understand certain directions. In such cases, you should help the student to understand the directions. Even in these cases, you should not resort to explicit directions. Instead, attempt to guide students to their own understanding of the directions.

   These warnings are crucial to the success of individualized instruction. If a teacher falls prey to student pleas of "what do we do now?" the individualized instructional mode will become a huge headache.

3. Assessing their own skills: Students are directed to particular activities within each LAP based on self-assessment of their skills. Inaccurate self-assessment will result in their doing activities they don't need and/or not doing activities they do need. Try to impress on them the importance of doing the self-assessment activities carefully and honestly.

4. Evaluating others: In some of the activities, students are asked to evaluate the work of their classmates. Students should be urged to take this responsibility seriously. Judging another person's efforts is a difficult life skill to acquire. Many people feel quite uncomfortable being in this position. Yet, it is a situation we cannot avoid in life. It is primarily for this reason that we have required students to evaluate one another's work.

One of the potential difficulties with individualized instruction is that it requires students to be more active and less re-active than in large group instruction. There is nowhere to hide in an individualized program. It takes time for students to adjust to coming into the classroom and getting down to work on their own without the teacher announcing the tasks for the day. Consequently, at the beginning, you may have to remind students to get down to work. Say something such as, "OK, everyone should know what to do. Pick up your activities wherever you left off yesterday. I'm available to help you if you need it. But, try to do the activities on your own or with your student partners." Then you should circulate around the class, talking individually to students or small groups of students who seem to be having difficulty working. Once everyone is working, you should continue responding to specific student requests for assistance or evaluation.

Another potential difficulty in an individualized program is evaluation and record keeping. This varies with the type of LAP used and is dealt with in the discussion of each LAP in this guide.

A word on student partners: You undoubtedly have your own methods for breaking students down into small groups for team work. We suggest teams of three to five students so that if students are absent, there are still enough students for team effort. Obviously, students who have demonstrated an inability to work together productively should not be allowed to work together. Also, we suggest that within teams, students rotate evaluations instead of simply exchanging them (i.e., person A gives his/her work to person B to evaluate; person B gives his/her work to person C to evaluate; person C gives his/her work to person A to evaluate).

A word on noise: Noise level in an individualized small-group setting tends to be somewhat higher than in a teacher-centered large-group setting. The level of noise allowed should depend on the tolerance of teacher and students. It should not be allowed to rise above a point where teacher or students cannot work effectively. On the other hand, it is not reasonable to demand absolute silence in such a mode of instruction.

A word on absenteeism: One big advantage of LAPs is that students who are absent haven't "missed" anything except the time spent on a LAP. We suggest that you have students make up missed time by spending an equivalent amount of time on the LAP at home. Similarly, if you feel that a student is wasting time in class or is not working fast enough on a LAP, you may wish to require the student to spend some time on the LAP at home. Aside from these cases, we recommend that students not have homework during LAP sessions. Instead, you should encourage students to put in a maximum effort during class. It should be pointed out to them that such an effort frees them from homework, but that if they get too far behind, they may have to work on the LAPs at home.

A word on the "best and the brightest": Some students will work through the LAPs very quickly. You should monitor the work of such "speed-demons" carefully to be certain it is of quality as well as quantity. Anticipating students whose work is of high quality and quantity, we have included more activities than most students can do in the time allotted. Thus, even the "best" and the "brightest" should have enough work to do.

One final word: We strongly recommend that you work through all the LAPs before distributing them. Read every page; be familiar with the objectives and procedures of every activity.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Because this is a values-oriented curriculum, and because policies and procedures regarding grades vary among schools, departments, and individual teachers, it is very difficult to prescribe one approach to the grading and evaluation of student achievement. We therefore suggest that each teacher adapt the recommendations below to his or her own teaching situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Grades should reflect effort, achievement, attitude, and mastery.

2. Effort may be measured by the amount of work done by students inside and outside of class. We would therefore recommend that you keep a record of all completed Student Activity Sheets done by students. A simple check (✓) system is preferable for grading these activity sheets since we are concerned here with effort, not excellence. A ✓+, ✓, ✓- distinction should simply reflect a greater or lesser effort evident in the student's work.

3. Achievement, or growth, can be measured only if what a student knows before beginning a course of study is accurately determined. The best way to measure achievement is to design an assessment procedure to be administered to students both before and after they participate in the course. The assessment procedures must be identical or highly similar if changes in levels of information, skills, and concept development are to be determined.

4. Attitude is best evaluated subjectively by the teacher in whatever way she/he usually makes such an assessment. It is our view that attitude is relevant but perhaps the least important of the dimensions evaluated for grading.

5. Mastery is the most absolute dimension a teacher evaluates and is closely associated with aptitude. It is a measure of a student's ability to achieve the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the curriculum. It does not take into account the student's level of mastery before taking a given course, and hence cannot be a measure of growth or achievement. It is simply a measure of the student's absolute level of mastery at the end of the course.

Although most teachers weigh mastery heavily in determining grades, it is our view that achievement rather than mastery ought to be most heavily weighted. To overemphasize mastery is to reward a student's aptitude more than his/her growth or his/her efforts, and discourages less able students from making an effort.

6. In summary, we suggest that each teacher evaluate students' effort, achievement, attitude, and mastery as recommended and then grade according to a predetermined weighting of these components, with achievement and effort being the primary criteria and attitude and mastery secondary considerations.

OPTIONS: A CAREER DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM FOR RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Course Outline

UNIT I: UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE IN OUR AREA (approximately 13 days)

Lesson	Topic
1	Who Are We?
2	Portrait of Women in Our Area
3	Oh, the Advantages and Disadvantages of Being a Woman in This Area
4	Lives of Women in This Area
5	Playing Life Roles
6	Responding to Ideal Relationships
7	Sex Stereotyping
8	Women's Work, Men's Work
9	Responsibilities of Running a Household
10	Being a Single Head of Household
11	Learning Activity Package: Organizing and Managing Time

UNIT II: DECISION MAKING (approximately 7 days)

Lesson	Topic
1	Life Auction
2	House Fire!!
3	Introducing Decision Making
4	Applying the Decision-Making Process
5	Applying the Decision-Making Process to a Personal Decision

UNIT III: LIFE PLANNING (approximately 12 days)

Lesson	Topic
1	Life Stages
2	This Is Your Lifeline
3	Decision Areas and Life Stages
4	The Game of Life: Choice and Chance
5	What Happened Yesterday? Debriefing the Game
6	Long- and Short-Range Decisions
7	Coping with Crisis
8	Learning Activity Package: Assessment Skills
9	Revising Your Identity: Playing the Game Again
10	Life Planning: Is It Worthwhile?

Course Outline (cont.)

UNIT IV: THE JUGGLING ACT: LIVES AND CAREERS (approximately 13 days)

Lesson	Topic
	PAT
1	Looking for Jobs
	(Optional Lesson: Writing a Resumé)
2	Preparing for an Interview
3	Creating Jobs
4	Life Skills
5	What Do You Say, Pat?
6	Starting a Small Business
	STEPHANIE
1	Your Record and Your Rights
2	Job Conflicts
3	Role Playing
4	Reviewing the Situation and Taking Action
	EVELYN
1	Welfare: True or False?
2	The Advantages and Disadvantages of Marriage
3	Influences on Our Lives
4	If You're So Smart, Lady, Why Aren't You Rich?
5	Vocational Training Opportunities
	TERRI
1	Interviewing Parents and Friends
2	Ways to Approach the Job Market
3	Family/Work Conflicts
4	Supporting a Family
	(Alternate Lesson: We're Getting Along OK, but It's No Picnic)
5	Family Goals
	SUMMING UP UNIT IV
1	What Has This to Do with Me?
2	Looking Backward: What Have We Learned?

UNIT II: DECISION MAKING

INTRODUCTION

Everyone worries about making decisions, particularly about making the right decision. Decision making is an important life skill, one that we use all the time. It is a skill that allows people to take control of their own lives. Some people approach the issue of decision making by relying on their "gut" reactions, others use an analytic approach. Unfortunately, there are other people who seem to shy away from making decisions altogether and who essentially make their decisions by deciding not to decide. Those who fall into the last category run the risk of letting others make decisions for them and letting others have control over what happens to them. Those who follow their "gut" reactions may be lucky or they may not, but they lack a process that they can apply to situations when they have conflicting "gut" reactions about what to do. Unit II provides students with experiences and classroom activities that will help them identify situations requiring decision-making skills and introduce them to a process for use in coming to a decision.

Inevitably, the issue of what constitutes a good decision will arise as students think about decision making. Most people define a good decision as one that results in a positive outcome, and conversely, a bad decision as one that results in an undesired or negative outcome. For the purposes of this unit, decisions are evaluated as "good" or "bad" on the basis of how they are made, not on the basis of their outcomes. It is important for students to understand that using a process that involves defining a problem or situation, identifying alternatives, and weighing choices will actually increase the likelihood of a desirable outcome. To make sure that students do not confuse a good decision with a positive outcome, it may be worth taking the time to present them with some situations that will make this concept clearer. For example: someone tells you they are going to flip a coin and give you $5.00 if you call it right. You decide to call heads and the coin lands on tails. Your decision clearly had an undesired outcome, since you did not receive the $5.00, but does that mean that you made a bad decision? On what basis could you possibly have made a better decision? They will easily see that luck, not decision making, is at work here. Another situation requiring a decision is as follows: Sally Jones is by far the best pitcher on the girls' softball team. Her coach decides to have her pitch in the finals of the playoffs. Unfortunately, she has a bad day. The other team scores ten runs off her and wins. The coach's decision had a negative outcome, but yet the decision to have her pitch was a good one based on her past performance.

The exercises in this unit are designed to allow students to learn and practice the skills of decision making. Included are situations that involve making quick decisions, crisis decisions, and long-range or life-planning decisions. The process that is introduced stresses the need to collect as much information relevant to the decision as possible. It also makes clear the fact that in every situation there are bound to be several choices or alternatives that should be considered. Most important, this unit should teach students that they can only take control of their lives to the extent that they are willing to make decisions for themselves.

UNIT II OBJECTIVES

A. Life Auction

Students will be able to:
1. Identify personal priorities in their lives and act on their relative importance.
2. Identify what information they need to make better decisions.

B. House Fire!!

Students will be able to:
1. Identify priorities in a crisis situation and act on their relative importance.
2. State the reasons for the decisions they make.

C. Introducing Decision Making

Students will be able to:
1. Understand decision making as a process.
2. State the process necessary for making a good decision.
3. Apply the process of decision making to a case study.

D. Applying the Decision-Making Process

Students will be able to:
1. Apply the decision-making process to hypothetical situations.

E. Applying the Decision-Making Process to a Personal Decision

Students will be able to:
1. Make an important personal decision using the five-step decision-making process.

LIFE AUCTION

Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify personal priorities in their lives and act on their relative importance.

2. Students will be able to identify what information they need to make better decisions.

Materials

Student Activity Sheet # 1: "Life Auction Catalog"
Play money: $20,000 per student (we used 20 tickets for each student, each ticket being $1000)
Large sheet: "Life Auction Catalog"

Lesson Plan

1. Distribute the "Life Auction Catalog" sheets and ask students to select four or five items that are very important to them, and to rank those items from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important).

2. Ask students to reflect for a few moments and try to write in the blank spaces one or two more items that are very important to them.

3. Divide the class into groups of three or four and ask students to share their lists within their groups. For 4 or 5 minutes, they should discuss the really important aspects of their lives.

4. Now the auction begins. The "money" should be distributed, each member of the class getting twenty tickets each representing $1,000. Bids must be raised by a minimum of $1,000. One student is appointed banker to collect the money during the auction. Then auction off the list, writing down the name of the high bidder and the winning bid for each item on the board. The auction should go at a brisk pace, forcing on-the-spot decisions. After 15 or 16 items have been auctioned, you might ask for a show of hands on "Who hasn't bought anything yet?" and "Who has more than one item already?"

5. At the end of the auction, ask again for a show of hands from those who did not buy anything. Ask those students to reflect for a moment on those items on which they might have made a higher bid. Then tell them that if they wish, they may purchase the items they have written in the blank spaces with their remaining money, asking each individual to assess the worth of his/her hand-written items in comparison to the price fetched by each item from the main list.

6. You may then ask the students to write one or two "I learned..." statements from this experience, or you may initiate a general discussion of the activity.

7. You should end this lesson by asking students how they made their decisions. Did the money affect their priorities? Did other people's decisions affect their choices? Did they change their minds during the auction? Elicit what information students feel they need to make better decisions.

LIFE AUCTION CATALOG*

Name of Winning Bidder	Item	Bid
_____	1. Healthy and happy children	_____
_____	2. Satisfying love life	_____
_____	3. Ability to influence others	_____
_____	4. Ability to draw love from others	_____
_____	5. Power over things (fix cars, program computers, build fences, etc.)	_____
_____	6. Artistic ability	_____
_____	7. Active and satisfying participation in athletics	_____
_____	8. Opportunities for risk and adventure	_____
_____	9. Intellectual ability	_____
_____	10. Good health	_____
_____	11. Great wealth	_____
_____	12. Approval from the opposite sex	_____
_____	13. Intellectual interest	_____
_____	14. Physical attractiveness	_____
_____	15. Admiration from others	_____
_____	16. Ability to begin and maintain friendships	_____
_____	17. Ability to bounce back after problems	_____
_____	18. Ability to give love	_____
_____	19. Activity that contributes to society	_____
_____	20. Close and loving family life	_____
_____	21. _____	_____
_____	22. _____	_____
_____	23. _____	_____

*Adapted from HUMAN VALUES IN THE CLASSROOM by Robert C. Hawley and Isabel L. Hawley, copyright (C) 1975 Hart Publishing Company, Inc.

LIFE AUCTION CATALOG*

Your Rank	Item	Bid
_____	1. Healthy and happy children	_____
_____	2. Satisfying love life	_____
_____	3. Ability to influence others	_____
_____	4. Ability to draw love from others	_____
_____	5. Power over things (fix cars, program computers, build fences, etc.)	_____
_____	6. Artistic ability	_____
_____	7. Active and satisfying participation in athletics	_____
_____	8. Opportunities for risk and adventure	_____
_____	9. Intellectual ability	_____
_____	10. Good health	_____
_____	11. Great wealth	_____
_____	12. Approval from the opposite sex	_____
_____	13. Intellectual interest	_____
_____	14. Physical attractiveness	_____
_____	15. Admiration from others	_____
_____	16. Ability to begin and maintain friendships	_____
_____	17. Ability to bounce back after problems	_____
_____	18. Ability to give love	_____
_____	19. Activity that contributes to society	_____
_____	20. Close and supportive family life	_____
_____	21. _____	_____
_____	22. _____	_____
_____	23. _____	_____

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HOUSE FIRE!!

Objectives

1. Students will be able to identify priorities in a crisis situation and act on their relative importance.

2. Students will be able to state the reasons for the decision they made.

Materials

Student Activity Sheet # 2: "House Fire!!"
Student Activity Sheet # 2a: "House Fire!! - Group Ranking" (one per group)

Lesson Plan

1. Pass out the problem sheets for House Fire! and have the students rank the list of needs from 1 (most important) to 13 (least important).

2. After the individual students have completed their ranking list, have them form groups of four to six and ask them to complete the group ranking sheet. The group must come to a consensus on what is most important without averaging votes and without "majority rule" voting. There should be a recorder for the group to record the group's ranking and their reasons for it.

3. Fifteen minutes before the end of class, the whole class should be reconvened and the decision making process should be discussed. Considerations to keep in mind are:

   a. What behaviors helped the decision making process?
   b. What behaviors impeded the process?
   c. What pattern of decision making occurred?
   d. Who were the influential members? How were they influential?
   e. What was each group's final ranking? What were their reasons? How do the groups compare?

HOUSE FIRE!! PROBLEM SHEET

Your next door neighbors' house burned to the ground last night when their space heater exploded. The family was awakened by their dog's frantic barking just in time to escape from the house before the main stairway collapsed. The family members -- Bernice Post, a 36-year-old divorcee, and her five children, Amy, 15, Elaine, 12, John, 7, Jessie, 4, and Bess, 18 months -- are now homeless, without insurance, having lost all their personal possessions, clothing, and house contents, and receiving only a limited income from welfare. The family members are all still in shock over their loss and incapable of thinking clearly about today, much less the future. You have decided that, as a neighbor and friend, you will help them out. You plan to start a fund to assist the family in reestablishing themselves. Also, because Mrs. Post is too upset by the fire, you temporarily take over the responsibility of contacting local resources to assist the family.

Below is a list of things that must be done to assist the family. Your task is to rank them in terms of their importance to the Post family. Rank them from 1 (the item you think is most important) to 13 (the item you think is least important and the last thing to be done).

_____ Locate immediate housing

_____ Take out a bank loan

_____ Find a babysitter/day care

_____ Contact utility companies (to disconnect utilities in the destroyed house)

_____ Start a clothing drive

_____ Inform a minister

_____ Collect food

_____ Obtain medical care

_____ Contact relatives

_____ Collect furniture, appliances

_____ Make a list of destroyed items, valuables, papers, etc.

_____ Contact school officials

_____ Contact Community Services Department

HOUSE FIRE!! GROUP RANKING

Note to Group Recorder

As a group you need to agree on the ranking of the following items. Through persuasive argument, not by majority rule, everyone must agree on a rank for each item.

In the space before each item, write the agreed upon ranking. In the space after each item, write the explanation of why the group decided as they did.

Rank #	Need	Explanation
_____	Locate immediate housing	
_____	Take out a bank loan	
_____	Find a babysitter/day care	
_____	Contact utility companies	
_____	Start a clothing drive	
_____	Inform a minister	
_____	Collect food	
_____	Obtain medical care	
_____	Contact relatives	
_____	Collect furniture, appliances	
_____	Make a list of destroyed items	
_____	Contact school officials	
_____	Contact Community Services Department	

INTRODUCING DECISION MAKING

Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand decision making as a process.

2. Students will be able to state the process necessary for making a good decision.

3. Students will be able to apply the process of decision making to a case study.

Materials

Large poster with the five decision-making steps outlined

Lesson Plan

1. Introduce the class to the concept of decision making as outlined in the unit introduction. Point out that the two previous activities, "House Fire" and "Life Auction," involved making a decision -- in one case about the needs of a family and in the other case, about personal priorities.

2. Ask students:
   - to identify what, if any, process they used to make decisions during those exercises.
   - if they have a difficult time making decisions and if so, why.
   - what information not provided in the exercise would have been helpful to them in making those decisions.

3. In the context of the discussion, some references to "good" and "bad" decisions may arise. Make sure that your students understand the distinction between a good decision and a positive outcome. Decisions are evaluated as "good" or "bad" on the basis of how well they are made, not solely on how they turn out. Once that distinction is clear in their minds, briefly introduce the five-step decision-making process that follows.

4. Explain that as a class they will apply this process to the following situation: Sarah is 17, her parents are getting a divorce, and each has asked her to live with him/her. Work through Sarah's predicament by asking the class the question(s) related to each step that will facilitate the application of the process to Sarah's case. (Note: This lesson is followed by a sample class summary of the step-by-step application of the process to Sarah's situation for the teacher's benefit.)

The Five-Step Process for Decision Making

Step 1: Recognize and state the decision needing to be made.
Use Reference Page 1: "Help in Recognizing Decision-Making Situations (pg. II-26); and Reference Page 2: "Helping You Decide What's Important" (pg. II-27).

Questions: Does Sarah's situation demand a decision?
What problem is Sarah trying to solve?
Is this an important decision for Sarah?

Step 2: State all possible alternatives.
Use Reference Page 3: "Identifying Choices" (pg. II-28).

Question: What are Sarah's choices?

Step 3: Evaluate the pros and cons of each alternative.
Pros: advantages or benefits Cons: disadvantages or costs
Use Reference Page 4: "Some Help with Determining the Basis for Decision Making" (pg. II-30);
Reference Page 5: "Types and Sources of Information" (pg. II-31); and
Reference Page 6: "Help with Assessing the Risks, Costs, and Benefits" (pg. II-32)

Question: What should Sarah base her decision on?
What does Sarah need to know before she can make her decision?
For each of Sarah's possible alternatives, what are the advantages, disadvantages, unknowns, and risks involved?

Step 4: Make the decision and evaluate it.
Use Reference Pages 7-8: "What Makes a Decision a 'Good' One?" (pg. II-33-34)

Questions: Given her alternatives, what should Sarah decide to do?
Is that decision a "good" decision?
Does that decision make sense given the information she gathered and the evaluation of her alternatives?
If Sarah is not happy next year, does that mean that she made a "bad" decision?

Step 5: Develop a plan of action and carry it out.
Use Reference Page 9: "Devising Strategies for Making Decisions Happen" (pg. II-35); and
Reference Page 10: "Some Help with Acting on Decisions" (pg. II-36)

Question: What must Sarah do to carry out her decision?

THE FIVE-STEP PROCESS FOR DECISION MAKING

Step 1: RECOGNIZE AND STATE THE DECISION NEEDING TO BE MADE

Does the situation demand a decision?
What is the problem you are trying to solve?
Is this an important decision for you?

Step 2: STATE ALL POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

What are your choices?

Step 3: EVALUATE THE PROS AND CONS OF EACH ALTERNATIVE

What factors should you base your decision on?
What do you need to know before you can make your decision?
For each alternative, what are the advantages, disadvantages, unknowns, and risks involved?

Step 4: MAKE THE DECISION AND EVALUATE IT

Given the alternatives, what do you decide to do?
Is that decision a "good" decision, given the information you have collected and your evaluation of your alternatives?
If you are not happy next year (or next month) with your decision, does that mean that you made a "bad" decision?

Step 5: DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION AND CARRY IT OUT

What must you do to carry out your decision?

SAMPLE CLASS SUMMARY

The following is a sample of a class' application of the process to Sarah's situation.

SITUATION:

Sarah's parents are getting a divorce and each wants her to live with him/her.

Step 1: Recognize and state the decision needing to be made.

Each parent already has asked her to live with him/her after the divorce. This very important decision needs to be made soon, for each parent is anxious for her to choose as soon as possible. Sarah knows that whatever the decision, there will be some change in her living situation. Her friendships will be affected, and as will her school life, at least for awhile. The more she thinks about it, the more complicated and important the decision of where to live becomes.

Step 2: State all possible alternatives.

- She could live with her mother
- She could live with her father
- She could live somewhere else -- with a roommate
  -- on her own
  -- with another family/relatives
- She could split her time between both parents

Step 3: Evaluate the pros and cons of each alternative.

In evaluating the alternatives, Sarah should consider the following factors:

- Her schooling plans for the future (if her parents live in different school districts)
- Her financial resources, especially if living alone
- Each parent's feelings about her living with the other
- Her relationships with her brothers and sisters
- The time and energy required to help with the home of each parent
- Her friends and social life

The following chart outlines some of the risks, costs, and benefits relevant to each of the six alternatives previously identified.

SAMPLE CLASS SUMMARY (cont.)

STEP 3: Assessing the risks, costs, and benefits

Choice	Risks	Costs	Benefits
1. live with Mom 1. live with Mom	Mom might have $ troubles Dad might be hurt	have to work -- interfere w/school & social life have been fighting with Mom a lot don't like Mom's boyfriend	feel closer to Mom than to Dad she can help me with stuff better housekeeper
2. live with Dad	Dad is busy with work Mom might be hurt	won't see Mom & kids so much have to do more housework	more freedom -- more on my own get to know Dad better won't have to work can help take care of Dad
3. live on my own	might be lonely money problems	rent, food, etc. would have to work no one to turn to have to do own housework	can do what I like won't be hassled with my parents' problems can have friends over a lot
4. live with roommate	might not find a good one might not get along	searching for roommate rent, food, etc. no privacy	no parent problems own my own new friends
5. live with another family/ relatives	might be hard to get along	less time with parents less time with myself	pay less for rent, food no parent problems won't have to worry about household and tasks will be able to see both parents
6. split my time with both	"monkey in the middle" might not have time to myself	won't have a place to call my own break up friendships transportation costs make both parents unhappy	will make both parents less unhappy

Step 4: Make the decision and evaluate it.

To actually make the decision, Sarah must weigh the alternatives. She decides that she will live with her father. Her relationship with her mother has been poor lately and she really does not like her mother's boyfriend. She feels that she will have more freedom since her father works and often travels away from home. She wants to do well in school, and not having to work is another important fact in her decision. She does feel that she will plan to spend a good deal of time with her mother on weekends to offset her choice to live with her father.

In evaluating her decision, Sarah needs to review the process she used to make it. She identified the decision she had to make, listed the alternatives, and weighed the risks, costs, and benefits. It appears that after using the process, Sarah's decision is a good one for her.

Step 5: Develop a plan of action and carry it out.

Sarah should go to each of her parents, telling them of her decision and explaining how she arrived at it. Once they both know of her plan, she should get a room ready for herself at her father's house and move in.

APPLYING THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Objectives

1. Students will be able to apply the decision making process to hypothetical situations.

Materials

Student Activity Sheets # 3a-j
Student Activity Sheet # 4

Lesson Plan

1. This lesson provides an opportunity for students to practice the decision making process by making a decision for another person. Hand out copies of SAS # 3a-j and have students pick several situations they would like to work on. Hand out copies of SAS # 4 which is a worksheet on which they record the five decision making steps and how they apply to the situation they have chosen. Students will need one copy of SAS # 4 for each situation they choose.

2. Tell the students that they can go beyond the written case, so long as it is appropriate and logical, i.e. in thinking up alternative choices or sources for getting information, they'll need to use their imaginations. Tell students to ignore Column 3 at this time.

3. When students have completed the five step process for the first situation they chose, have them exchange papers with someone else who worked on the same situation. (Note: You may wish to pair up students at the time the situation selection takes place.) The partners should check to see whether (a) the steps were identified correctly, and (b) if the decision was a "good" one, i.e., all possible alternatives were identified and considered.

4. The "evaluators" should place a (✓) check in the third column of SAS # 4 next to all steps that are properly completed. This activity sheet should then be returned to its owner and any steps not marked with a (✓) check should be worked on further. Student partners may wish to discuss the application of the process to the situation after they have completed their own worksheet.

5. Students should work on several different situations. How many they should do depends on their level of proficiency. The point of the lesson is to give them practice with hypothetical situations before having them apply the process to a personal situation. You may want to spot check student work in the course of the lesson to identify students needing more help.

Notes to the Teacher

1. Student generated situations or problems tend to be more interesting and instructive than those that are provided as SAS # 3a-j. Students working in small groups may choose to generate their own situations after working on a few of the cases provided.

SHERRY

Sherry is 16, and pregnant. Her boyfriend wanted her to have an abortion, but Sherry refused. Her parents want her to give the baby up for adoption. Sherry wants to keep her baby. She knows that adoption would give the child two parents, not just one, and that the adoptive parents would be able to afford more material advantages for the baby. But Sherry is looking forward to her new baby, and plans to be a good mother. She has two friends who kept their babies, and they seem to be doing fine.

JERRY

As the time draws near to fill out college applications, Jerry has to make a decision. His parents want him to go to one of Nebraska's state colleges where tuition would be lower, and he would be near home. His best friend is urging him to cut the "apron-strings," and apply at out-of-state universities. Jerry thinks he can get some financial aid, wherever he decides to go, and his grades are good enough to make him confident that he can get accepted.

KITTY

Kitty has found an ideal three-room apartment and plans to move into it right after high school graduation. Her mother feels that Kitty should stay at home and contribute money to run the household, since her father no longer lives with the family. Kitty is willing to help her mother financially when she can, but she really wants to feel that she is on her own.

TONY

Tony has just bought a used car with money he earned himself. He has just enough money left to register the car. His father says he cannot drive it unless he has insurance. Tony thinks this is unfair. The State he lives in doesn't require insurance coverage if a person's driving record is clean. Tony knows that he is a good driver.

DIANE

Diane's little sister wants to join the Little League. She has worked hard and is a good ball player. At the try-outs, she was told that only boys could be on the team. Diane knows that it is against the law to keep her sister off the team. Diane doesn't think it would be worth taking the coach to court on sex discrimination charges. Her real concern is her sister's feelings. She isn't sure what to do to protect her sister's best interests.

DAVE

Dave's family has planned a two-week camping vacation in the mountains. Until lately, Dave looked forward to the trip. Now he has a summer job and doesn't want to go on the vacation. His father wants Dave to speak to his boss about starting work after the trip. Dave thinks he would lose the job and that it would be too late to get another one after he came home. He feels that, at 16, he is old enough to stay home by himself. And he wants to earn enough money to buy a car in the fall.

BRENDA

Brenda and Sandra are identical twins. People have always mistaken them for each other. Sandra doesn't mind, but Brenda wants to be known as an individual. They have just graduated from the eighth grade and have to decide which high school to attend. Since their town doesn't have its own high school, students and their parents choose between three area schools. The girls' parents want them to go to the same school to ease the transportation problem. Brenda, however, does not want to continue to go to school with her twin sister. Her mother is agreeable, but her father is not sure. He thinks Brenda is running away from her problem.

SAM

Sam has applied for a summer job at the hospital. He would like to work in one of the labs, but the job he is offered is a typing job in the admissions office. He types very well, and he is told that there is a real need for that skill, especially in the summer when many employees are on vacation. Sam is worried about what the guys will say when they find out he is doing "women's work." Yet he needs the job and the money is better than any of his friends are making.

CAROL

Carol is graduating from high school next month. She has been offered a job as a secretary at a local building supply company. Carol knows that her duties would consist of typing invoices and bills, filing, and taking inventory. The pay is minimum wage. Carol has always wanted to live in the city and feels that her secretarial skills are good enough to get her a much more interesting job in a large company. Her parents have pointed out to her that competition for jobs is stiff in the city, and have urged her to take the job in town.

FRANK

Frank and Betty are engaged to be married. The wedding is only six weeks away. Frank has received a job offer from a company in a town 500 miles away. The new job would give him added responsibility, more pay, and better benefits than his present job. Frank has asked Betty to advance the wedding date and move to the new town in three weeks' time. Betty is afraid she will be lonely so far from her family and friends. Frank is troubled. He wants to accept the job offer, but he also wants to marry Betty and doesn't want to make unfair demands on her.

Student Activity Sheet # 4

CASE NAME: _____

Step in Decision Making	How It Applies to the Case		Check by Evaluator
1.			
2. a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
3. a.	Pros	Cons	
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
4.			
5.			

APPLYING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS TO A PERSONAL DECISION

Objective

Students will be able to make an important personal decision using the five-step decision-making process.

Materials

Student Activity Sheet # 5
Student Activity Sheet # 6

Lesson Plan

1. Hand out SAS # 5. Tell students to ignore the column entitled "Revision after Evaluation." It will be filled in later. This last activity of the unit requires students to apply the decision-making process to a personal decision so that they will see that the process is useful in their own lives.

2. The students' choice of a personal decision is important. Try to encourage them to choose decisions of some consequence; not what to have for supper or what to wear Saturday night. If the decision can be acted on in the near future, all the better, as it will allow students to complete the process.

3. Once students have completed SAS # 5, they should get a copy of SAS # 6, which has them evaluate their use of the process in reaching their decision.

4. Ask students to go back to SAS # 5 and revise those steps that were not checked "yes" on the evaluation. They should write their revisions in column 3 on SAS # 5 so that you can see how they revised it.

5. Collect SAS # 5 and # 6, and read and evaluate them for proper application of the process and for accurate evaluation.

6. Now that they have learned how to use a decision-making process, ask your class how many of them plan to (a) make decisions on gut reactions, (b) make decisions using a process like the one they learned in this unit, or (c) let others make decisions for them.

Ask students to respond to the notion that good decision-making skills can increase their control over their own lives.

MY PERSONAL DECISION

Choose a situation that requires a decision. It can be a situation you faced recently or one that you expect to face soon. Work through it using the same format you used on the case studies in the previous lesson. Make sure that the situation you choose requires an important decision. (Tell your teacher the situation before completing the activity sheet.)

Situation requiring a decision: _____

Step in Decision Making	How It Applies to My Situation		Revision after Evaluation
1.			
2. a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
3. a.	Pros	Cons	
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			
4.			
5.			

CHECKING YOUR DECISION: AN EVALUATION

Read over your decision-making process on SAS # 5. Place a (✓) check in the appropriate column below, indicating whether you completed each step.

	Yes	No
1. I identified a real decision-making situation.		
2. I clearly identified and stated possible choices in the situation.		
3. I identified the relevant factors on which to base my decision.		
4. I made my decision.		
5. I developed a plan to make my decision happen.		
6. My decision is a solution to the original decision-making situation.		

HELP IN RECOGNIZING DECISION-MAKING SITUATIONS

If your class has difficulty recognizing decision-making situations, perhaps this list of common decision-making situations will help you.

A. Personal and social decisions

1. Should I get married?
2. Should I leave home after high school graduation?
3. Who do I want to date?
4. Who should my friends be?
5. Should I live for the moment or plan for the future?

B. Educational and career decisions

1. What career should I choose?
2. Should I go to college?
3. Where and for whom should I work?
4. Should I work for myself?
5. Should I get the job that pays the best or one that I like?

C. Health and safety decisions

1. Should I let my boyfriend drive when he's drunk?
2. How often should I see a dentist?
3. Should I buy car insurance?
4. Can I leave my baby alone while I go to the store?
5. Should I smoke?

D. Moral, legal, and ethical decisions

1. Should I cheat on a test?
2. Should I report someone for stealing?
3. Should I have premarital sex?
4. Should I smoke pot?
5. Should I go faster than 55 mph on the interstate highway?

E. Common, everyday decisions

1. What should I wear?
2. What should I cook for supper tonight?
3. Should I do my homework or go out with my friends?
4. Should I tell a friend she's getting on my nerves?
5. Should I wash my hair today?

F. Financial decisions

1. Should I finance my car or pay cash?
2. Can I afford to move into a place of my own?
3. Does my job pay well enough to cover my expenses?
4. Can we afford to have children now?
5. Where can I shop for the best bargains?

HELPING YOU DECIDE WHAT'S IMPORTANT

In making decisions it is very helpful if you can rate the relative importance of decisions. Then you will give the most important decisions the attention they deserve. You will also be less likely to waste a lot of time and effort making decisions that are not that important.

Here are five questions you can ask yourself to help you decide how important a decision is.

1. How will this decision affect my happiness and well-being?

2. How will this decision affect my career?

3. How will this decision affect the lives of my family or other people?

4. How will this decision affect my immediate situation?

5. How will this decision affect me in the long run?

A decision that has only immediate or short-run effects is usually not as important as one with long-run effects.

A decision that affects others besides yourself usually takes on additional importance.

Finally, the importance of a decision depends on your own personal goals and values. Knowing these goals can help you decide what is more or less important to you.

IDENTIFYING CHOICES

One difficulty some people have in making decisions is not recognizing all the available choices. Their vision is unnecessarily limited. There are several techniques for expanding that vision.

1. Brainstorming

Sometimes it is hard to get started making a list of alternatives. Here is one technique that almost always helps in making lists.

- Get together a group of four or five people.
- Find a chalkboard or, better, a large piece of paper, and a Magic Marker.
- Ask one person to be the recorder.
- The others in the group then give ideas for the list as soon as they think of them.
- The recorder writes down the ideas as fast as he/she can, abbreviating words to save time but not changing the meaning of what is said.
- Every idea for the list should be written down, no matter how silly or inappropriate it might seem. No one's idea should be criticized -- everyone is entitled to her/his own ideas. Sometimes apparently silly or "far out" ideas turn out to be very helpful.
- At the end of the brainstorming session, group members select those items they want to use for their own lists.
- During the brainstorm, if you get ideas faster than the recorder can write them down, record them on the paper. Then, when the recorder catches up, call out the ideas you saved. By writing down your ideas as they come to you instead of holding them in your head, you clear your mind so that you can come up with new ideas.
- Don't bother writing down ideas that the recorder writes. During the brainstorming session use your brain to think of new ideas. As you hear the ideas of others, you think of other ideas, which in turn gives others ideas. What results is a "storm" of ideas from your collective brains.

2. The A to Z method

Start by naming choices at the extreme opposite ends of an issue. Then move gradually from one extreme to the other by naming choices. Below is an example of this method.

> The situation is that John has asked Doris to marry him. What should she do? A - refuse, Z - accept, B - refuse and stop dating him, C - refuse but agree to continue dating him among other guys, D - refuse but agree to continue dating him exclusively, E - accept but only agree to become engaged for an indefinite period of time, F - accept but with a long engagement, G - accept and set a date for the wedding, H - accept and elope.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	.....	Z
Refuse	Refuse and stop dating	Refuse but agree to continue dating him among other guys	Refuse but agree to continue dating him exclusively	Agree only to become engaged for an indefinite period of time	Accept but with a long engagement	Accept and set a date for the wedding	Accept and elope		Accept

One important point to remember in identifying possible choices is that a decision usually involves a choice between two or more alternatives. A decision not to do something is not an alternative. There is no such thing as "or not." Always identify specific choices.

Another important point in identifying possible choices is to recognize the fact that you can be distracted by related factors, particularly emotional ones.

A final point is to try to recognize the issues underlying decisions.

SOME HELP WITH DETERMINING THE BASIS OF DECISION MAKING

If your students have trouble identifying the bases on which to make decisions, you may find the following list of possible factors and influences on decision making useful.

A. Your decision might be based on your feelings such as: pride, loneliness, respect, fear, ambition, self-respect, responsibility, guilt, anger, love, jealousy, pressure, excitement, fulfillment.

B. Your decision might be based on your goals such as: earning money, happiness, recognition, power, satisfaction, health, advancement, a career, a college degree, security, independence.

C. Your decision might be based on your personal limits such as: time, experience, opportunity, health, knowledge, freedom, skills.

D. Your decision might be based on the potential to do such things as: help you in the long run, help you in the short run, give you direction, present a challenge.

E. Your decision might be based on the opportunity to do things such as: travel, work with people, make some money, live near your family, improve your skills.

F. Your decision might be based on your attitudes about things such as: yourself, the law, right and wrong, other people, religion, sexual behavior.

G. Your decision might be based on your abilities in areas such as: skills, knowledge, understanding, logic, common sense, intuition, experience.

H. Your decision might be based on influences such as: your parents, your friends, your teachers, TV, newspapers, books, movies.

TYPES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Two most important aspects of gathering information are knowing what you want to find out and knowing where to look. The following approaches may be helpful to your students.

One of the best places to look is inside yourself. You will find out such important information as: what you enjoy, what skills you have, what kind of life you would like to lead, what you value, what your hopes are, what you fear, what you want now, what you want in the future, and what you expect to happen to you.

It isn't easy to get that information by talking to yourself. So, sometimes talking to others will help you to understand the information inside you better. Talk to your parents, your fiancé, your friends, your boss, your minister, your brothers and sisters, and anyone else you think might be able to help you. They may help clarify what you feel.

But there are also important sources of information in addition to yourself. You can go to people, places, or things, such as: employment agencies, schools, Planned Parenthood, your parents, newspapers, colleges, libraries, lawyers, doctors, teachers, social workers, the police, psychologists, neighbors, friends, and mental health clinics.

You can ask them for information such as: facts, opinions, experiences, attitudes, suggestions, warnings, opportunities, ideas, and counseling.

HELP WITH ASSESSING RISKS, COSTS, AND BENEFITS

No alternative is without its risks, costs, and benefits. Recognizing these is a crucial step in deciding what choice to make.

What is a "cost"? It is important that students do not see cost only as money. Alternatives involve sacrifices in terms of money, opportunity, power, prestige, time, energy, etc. For example: going on to further education costs money, time, and energy; working as a supermarket checker involves a sacrifice of opportunity, power, and prestige.

Why make a choice that has obvious 'costs'? Because the same alternative may have equally obvious benefits in terms of money, satisfaction, opportunity, enjoyment, power, security, prestige, etc. For example: further education may have the benefit of providing satisfaction, increased opportunity, enjoyment, power, and prestige; working as a supermarket checker may provide money and security.

There are also costs and benefits that are not as certain. We call these "risks." An alternative may risk time, money, reputation, energy, security, prestige, power, etc. That is, by selecting a certain alternative, you may gain these benefits or lose them. For example: running for political office involves the risk of losing and thereby losing time, money, energy, and prestige. But it also involves the possibility of winning and thereby winning power, prestige, and reputation.

For every choice in a given situation, try to identify the risks, costs, and benefits.

Then, decide how important each of these is to you. Do the costs outweigh the benefits? Are the risks too great? Do the potential benefits outweigh both the risks and the costs?

WHAT MAKES A DECISION "GOOD"?

In most situations, "good" decisions result in positive outcomes, although, as you know, sometimes luck or other events beyond the control of the decision maker cause a negative outcome. So we cannot judge a decision solely by its outcome. Yet "good" decisions make positive outcomes more likely. How?

We believe that a good decision is one in which certain decision-making skills are used to make the best choice under the circumstances. In other words, a good decision is one that is arrived at by a process that is likely to result in a positive outcome.

We therefore judge a decision by how well it is made, not on how well it turns out. Students tend to have a great deal of trouble with this concept, so it might be useful to provide them with the example given below, or those in the unit introduction, in the context of discussing decisions versus outcomes.

Decisions versus Outcomes

Suppose someone tells you that they are going to flip a coin and that if you call it correctly, they'll give you $5. You decide to call tails, but the coin comes up heads. Did you make a bad decision?

If you said "yes," you are confusing outcomes with decisions. The outcome of the coin flip was negative because you didn't win, but you had no control over that outcome. You had no way of knowing beforehand which decision would result in a better outcome for you. Your decision in this case was as good as it could be. A poor decision would have been to say "neither" or "both."

A decision is an act of choosing between two or more alternatives based on your judgment. An outcome is the result of that decision plus the effect of events that are beyond your control.

Thus, while it is true that good decisions often result in positive outcomes, sometimes they do not.

Criteria for Evaluating Good Decisions

Remember that the quality of a decision should not be based on how it turns out, but on how well it is made. A good decision is one in which the decision maker has used the decision-making skills listed below:

1. Recognize a situation calling for a decision.
2. Know the importance of the decision in your life.
3. Identify and state alternative choices.
4. Know what factors to base your decision on.
5. Gather the information you need about each alternative.
6. Assess the risks, costs, and benefits of the alternatives.
7. Make the decision.
8. Evaluate the decision.

DEVISING STRATEGIES FOR MAKING DECISIONS HAPPEN

Sometimes simply making a decision isn't enough to make it happen. Often there are blocks that prevent you from following through on your decision. You may not know where to start enacting your decision, or your decision may require difficult or complicated steps to carry it out.

Devising strategies for enacting decisions requires problem-solving skills. The most important step in problem solving is stating the problem simply. Do this by using one of the five "WH" questions: What? Why? Who? When? Where? How? For devising most strategies the most useful question is "how?" (For example: how to get along with my parents, how to get a job, how to get an A in a course.)

Next apply a problem-solving technique to the question you have stated such as the following:

1. Brainstorming: see page 3 of the reference material.

2. The A to Z method: see page 3a of the reference material.

3. Experiential method: ask yourself if you have ever solved a similar problem. If so, how did you do it? Do you think the strategy will work again?

4. Ask an "expert": ask someone else who has faced and solved similar problems.

5. Analogy method: think of some situation that occurs in nature that is like your problem. How does nature solve the problem? Can you think of a way you could solve your problem similarly?

SOME HELP WITH ACTING ON DECISIONS

Sometimes the hardest thing in the world is to act on something you have decided to do. There are a number of reasons why you may have this difficulty.

1. You may be unsure that your decision is a good one. To check this, review your decision-making process. Did you follow every step as carefully as you could? If not, do it again until you have confidence in your decision. That should help you act.

2. You may be nervous about the outcome of your decision. This is difficult -- the best-made decisions sometimes have terrible outcomes. One way to deal with this problem is to use a "scenario." This is a technique for imagining possible outcomes. Here's how to do it:

Ask yourself, "What is the worst that could happen?" Try to picture it happening.

Then ask yourself how you would feel if it did happen. Would it be awful or just unpleasant?

Now ask yourself, "How likely is the worst possible scenario to happen?"

Then ask yourself, "What is the best that could happen?" Again, try to imagine it, feel it, and estimate how likely it is to happen.

Then ask yourself, "What is the most likely outcome of my decision?" It will probably be neither the best nor the worst outcome. Again, imagine it and feel it.

Now ask yourself if the risk of the worst outcome, the possibility of the best outcome, and the quality of the most likely outcome make your decision worth acting on. If the answer is yes, then do it. If the answer is no, you should reconsider your decision. Go back to your assessment of risks, costs, and benefits. You will probably want to reevaluate these in light of what your scenarios told you.

3. You may not have a workable plan for acting on your decision. If this is the case, consider new strategies (page 9) and continue here.

4. You may simply be shy, nervous, passive, or frightened by nature. These are hard to cure but easy to bypass. If you are sure of your decision and you have decided that the outcome is likely to be one you can live with, and you have a workable strategy for enacting the decision, but are being held back by a personality trait such as shyness, fear, or nervousness, you need a "do it" technique:

1. Get a friend to make a deal with you that if you'll act on your decision, she'll act on hers.
2. Get someone to dare you to act on your decision.
3. Decide on some arbitrary signal -- such as a time, an event, seeing someone or something, or hearing something -- and jump into your decision immediately.
4. Ask someone to push you into acting on the decision. They can do this by reminding you, embarrassing you, threatening you, or using any other method of persuasion they can think of.
5. Ask someone to bribe you into acting on your decision. They can offer you some reward if you do it.
6. Reward yourself for acting on a decision by treating yourself to something you really want. For example: reward yourself with a TV program after acting on your decision to do your homework.
7. Close your eyes and jump. After all it is something you really want to do.

O.K., it's time to act.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: AIDS FOR THE TEACHER

Many of the teachers involved in the OPTIONS project felt that some resource information concerned with how to better manage the wide variety of activities used in the classroom would be helpful. The following appendix has a number of such activities and aids for your use. It is by no means complete, and as you find things that work for you, feel free to append them too. The materials fall into the following categories:

Role Playing: Ideas for more effective role playing.

Page 2: Role Playing

Small Groups: Management ideas and activities relating to small group work.

Page 4: Working in Small Groups

Page 5: Broken Squares: An Experiment in Cooperation

Discussion Techniques: What is a discussion? Four different ways to elicit classroom discussion.

Page 8: Brainstorming: Essential Elements

Page 9: The Buzz Session

Page 10: Classroom Discussions

Problem Solving: An activity approach.

Page 13: My 80th Birthday

Page 14: Shoe Store: Group Problem Solving

Page 17: Decision Charting

ROLE PLAYING

Role playing is a dramatization of a situation in which students assume the identity and role of a character in a specifically delineated circumstance. Role playing should be an unrehearsed "play" in which students act out realistically, yet spontaneously, their identified roles.

Problem solving is frequently the major goal of a role play situation. Through participation or observation of a role play situation, students can gain insight into the effectiveness of the roles people play in real life.

Essentially a laboratory experience, role playing can provide vivid demonstration of people's behavior, attitudes, values, and communication skills.

Some guidelines to consider when planning a classroom role play activity:

1. Students should be introduced to the concept, process, and purpose of role playing and encouraged to cooperate and participate in this new (and perhaps puzzling) learning activity.

2. Situations in a role playing activity should be clearly presented and as factual as possible. Background information, stage setting, and facts should be available to the players.

3. Encourage students to avoid "hamming it up" and to adhere as much as possible to the role they are to present in the case.

4. Provide ample time and space for the role play preparation and staging. Also, sufficient time should be allotted for debriefing after the performance.

5. If students have never participated in a role play, it may be necessary to generate interest and awareness by involving yourself in a sample presentation.

6. Where possible, encourage all students to get involved in the activity. If not players, students can be reactors to individual players, class feedback recorders, or directors.

7. Since some students strongly resist role playing, alternate approaches are sometimes needed, such as the following:

   Taping -- allowing students to tape their "role played" conversations, retaping until they are satisfied to share it with the class.

   Puppets -- have students use puppets to draw attention away from themselves, making them less self-conscious.

   Script Writing -- working in small groups, students can prepare a script for their role play presentation, allowing them to read their responses rather than having to "think on their feet."

8. Provide students, both players and observers, with an opportunity to discuss the role play activity. Encourage them to react to the situation and the roles played by the characters, NOT to the individual student performance. Clarify for students that the participants are trying to realistically represent a role assigned them and that they are not performing as they personally feel or might react themselves.

9. Frequently for follow-up, it is helpful to have another group of students reenact a role play after the class has analyzed and discussed the original presentation.

WORKING IN SMALL GROUPS

Small group discussions and projects require considerable preparation and guidance by the teacher. Well-planned and -managed small group activities can promote effective learning for students by adding variety to the class and encouraging greater leadership, responsibility, positive social interaction, self-direction, and role changes.

If small group activities fail, the reason is usually inadequate teacher preparation for group work, peer conflict, student immaturity, or lack of student motivation.

Here are some guidelines for using small groups successfully:*

1. Explain to the student the purpose and function of each group.

2. Be specific in instructing the students about the tasks to be accomplished. You can plan the tasks with the students.

3. If appropriate, have students form their own small groups. Let each group select a chairperson, recorder, and so on if possible. Sometimes it is necessary for the teacher to assign group membership to balance the academic, socioeconomic, or behavioral climate of the groups.

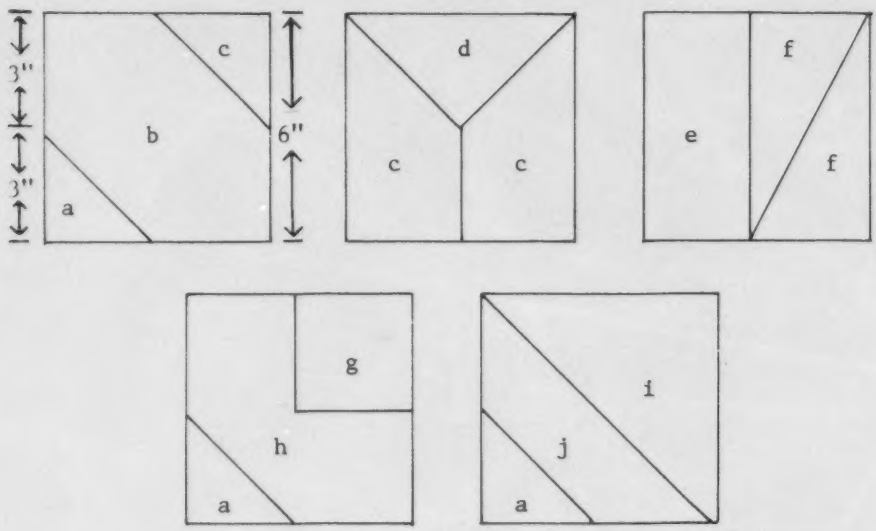
4. Remind students that group activity is a socialized team learning situation, the success of which depends on the cooperation and the orderliness of the group members.

5. Don't give up if the first trial run fails, especially when students are not used to the method. Talk about it with the students and try again.

*Adapted from: A Resource Guide for Secondary School Training, Eugene C. Kim and Richard C. Kellough. New York: Macmillan Co., 1974.

BROKEN SQUARES: AN EXPERIMENT IN COOPERATION*

Before class, prepare a set of squares and an instruction sheet for every five students. A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of stiff paper cut into patterns that form five 6-by-6-inch squares, as shown in the diagram below. Several individual combinations will be possible but only one total combination. Cut squares into parts a through j and lightly pencil in the letters. Then mark the envelopes A through E and distribute the pieces thus: envelope A, pieces i, h, e; B, pieces a, a, a, c; C, pieces a, j; D, pieces d, f; and E, pieces g, b, f, c.



Erase the small letters from the pieces and write instead the envelope letters A through E, so that the pieces can easily be returned for reuse.

Divide the class into groups of five and seat each group at a table equipped with a set of envelopes and an instruction sheet. Ask that the envelopes be opened on your signal.

Begin the exercise by asking what "cooperation" means. List on the board the behaviors required for cooperation. For example: Everyone has to understand the problem. Everyone needs to believe that he or she can help. The instructions have to be clear. Everyone needs to think of the other person as well as himself/herself.

Describe the experiment as a puzzle that requires cooperation. Read the instructions aloud, point out that each table has a copy, and then give the signal to open the envelopes.

*"Today's Education," NEA Journal, October 1969, p. 57.

BROKEN SQUARES: AN EXPERIMENT IN COOPERATION (cont.)

The instructions are as follows: Each person should have an envelope containing pieces for forming squares. At the signal, the task of the group is to form five squares of equal size. The task is not completed until everyone has before him/her a perfect square and all the squares are of the same size.

These are the rules: No member may speak. No member may ask for a card or in any way signal that he/she wants one. Members may give cards to other members.

When all or most of the groups have finished, call time and discuss the experience. Ask questions such as: How did you feel when someone held a piece and did not see the solution? What was your reaction when someone finished a square and then sat back without seeing whether his/her solution prevented others from solving the problem? What were your feelings when you finished your square and then began to realize that you would have to break it up and give away a piece? How did you feel about a person who was slow in seeing the solution? If you were that person, how did you feel? Did you feel helped or hindered by others?

In summarizing the discussion, you may wish to review the behaviors listed at the beginning. You may also want to ask whether the game relates to the way the class works on a daily basis.

BROKEN SQUARES GROUP INSTRUCTION SHEET

Each of you has an envelope that contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the teacher gives the signal to begin, the task of your group is to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him/her a perfect square the same size as those of the other group members.

Specific limitations are imposed upon your group during this exercise:

1. No member may speak.
2. No member may ask another member for a piece or in any way signal that another person is to give him/her a piece.
3. No one may reach into another person's area and point to or take a piece.
4. Members may voluntarily give pieces to other members.

BRAINSTORMING: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The purpose behind brainstorming is to generate a maximum number of ideas in the shortest period of time.

There are three basic rules for structuring a "brainstorming" session.

1. The aim is quantity. The more ideas the better.

2. There must be complete freedom of expression, no matter how far out ideas may seem. Every idea is considered worthwhile and valuable.

3. As an idea is voiced, it may be developed or supplemented by another person with the goal of seeking different combinations and improvements.

It is suggested that the "brainstormed" ideas be listed and visible to everyone, i.e., on a chalkboard or an easel.

THE BUZZ SESSION

The "buzz session" is a way to encourage people to be more active in a discussion.

1. Structure of the group:

   a. Five to eight participants in each group.

   b. The group should be arranged in a circle, semi-circle, or around a table.

   c. Each group should be separated from the others.

   d. The group leaders (a leader and a recorder) may be assigned or selected by the group, or emergent leadership may be encouraged.

2. Information to be given to each group:

   a. The problem or problems they are to attempt to resolve.

   b. The length of time they will have to interact.

   c. What is expected of them before they return to the larger group.

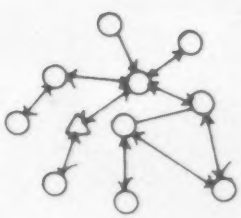
   d. What is expected of them when they return to the larger group.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

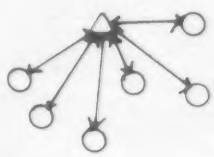
Numerous planned and unplanned opportunities for classroom discussions appear throughout the OPTIONS curriculum. The frequency and success of discussion sessions will depend on several factors:

1. Topic: Student and teacher interest in and comfort with the subject.
2. Climate: Student and teacher comfort levels with one another.
3. Group: Previously established classroom communication patterns.

Instructional discussions within the OPTIONS curriculum are intended to serve as purposeful dialogues between teacher and student, and student and student, that proceed toward preestablished group or curriculum goals. Ideally a discussion is a conversation, not a monologue or a questioning period, that involves an exchange of ideas, feelings, information, and responses of all individuals. The teacher's role is to facilitate the exchange among students, frequently through a transitional phrase, word, or expression. For the purposes of the OPTIONS curriculum, a classroom discussion is not a conversation that always emanates from the teacher.



Ideal Instructional Discussion Pattern



Unsatisfactory Discussion Pattern

△ = Teacher

○ = Students

Role of Discussion Leader (Teacher or Student)

1. Facilitator
2. Listener
3. Clarifier
4. Encourager (get everyone involved)
5. Resource (provide information)
6. Questioner
7. Focuser
8. Summarizer

The delicate balance that a discussion leader plays requires that the person be able to respect the ideas and opinions of others, be willing to protect the right of everyone in the class to say what he or she thinks or feels (regardless of popularity), and abstain from imposing his or her own ideas upon others.

Good planning is an integral part of any discussion for both teacher and student. Some hints:

Preparation:

1. Select a topic and gather related information.
2. Where possible provide resource or support material (audiovisuals, books, bulletin boards).
3. Outline the critical issues to be included or addressed during the discussion.
4. Prepare a list of key questions/issues that can be used to keep the group on the topic.
5. Design a plan for running the discussion (exactly what role you will play).

Starting:

6. Seat the group comfortably to encourage an atmosphere for sharing (circles are good, providing face-to-face contact).
7. Prepare your class for a discussion session by explaining any procedural or ground rules (these should be determined by the group).
8. Select a starting activity to develop interest in the topic. For example: a brainstorming session, buzz session, pretest, small introductory presentation, filmstrip, news article, etc. Note: Most recommended discussion sessions in the OPTIONS curriculum already have lead-in activities.
9. Have some alternate approaches available to kick off a discussion if one technique is not effective.

Guiding the Discussion:

10. Once a discussion has started, the teacher's primary role is to keep it rolling in a positive direction. This will involve:
    a. Careful observation and listening (it is often helpful to keep an outline of key issues -- this also helps to keep the teacher quiet).
    b. Skillful questioning to encourage student participation and progress toward the session goal. (Open-ended, general, thought-provoking questions are far more successful than simple ones that solicit yes/no responses.)
    c. Encouraging student interaction by questions such as:
       "Do you agree with so and so?"
       "If you were in that situation....."
       "Suppose you could....."
       (These are good discussion starters or revivers.)
    d. Creating and maintaining a supportive classroom environment by:
       i. Being accepting and nonjudgmental.
       ii. Refraining from constantly interrupting and trying to affirm your authority.
       iii. Correcting or clarifying misinformation and inconsistencies (best done through requestioning or gentle interruption).
       iv. Keeping the group on track by asking key question(s) when necessary.
       v. Summarizing periodically or asking a class member to recap the major issues.

Finishing Up and Evaluating:

11. Keep track of the time and provide ample time (minimum of five minutes) to summarize or recapitulate the discussion points raised or the conclusions reached. If the class is embroiled in a discussion and you are reluctant to disturb that process, it is always advisable to summarize the day's happenings and then design a suitable follow-up activity that will reinforce the discussion outcomes clearly.
12. Key considerations in evaluating the success of a discussion are:
    a. Did you accomplish your discussion goals/objectives?
    b. If not, why not?
    c. Did you or any class member monopolize the discussion?
    d. Did everyone participate?

Teaching through discussion can be both enjoyable and enlightening if you are sensitive and accepting of the contributions of your students. A successful discussion session requires careful planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

MY 80TH BIRTHDAY

"Today is my 80th birthday." Write a brief account of your life since leaving high school and include at least three major decisions you made during your life and the reasons that you made them.

Compare your account with classmates. What do these reveal about your and other people's aspirations, expectations, and decisions?

SHOE STORE: GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING*

Purpose: To observe communication patterns in group problem solving and to explore interpersonal influences in problem solving.

This activity will take anywhere from thirty to sixty minutes, depending upon the sophistication of the group. Students should be divided into teams of four to five members each and asked to cluster around the room.

The only materials necessary for this activity are the problem sheet and perhaps paper and pencil (optional).

The teacher should explain to the students that they are about to perform a group task in solving a mathematical problem. Tell them that they are to arrive at a consensus; that is, each member of the group must agree somewhat with the conclusion that is reached by the group. Members are urged to pay attention to how the group arrives at the conclusion so that they can later discuss the process.

Hand out, read, or write on the chalkboard the problem (see attached sheet).

When the groups arrive at a conclusion, they raise their hands, and you go to them and ask if all are in agreement. Then, ask one member to explain the process used in arriving at the conclusion. (Correct answer: $8.00)

Continue until all groups have arrived at the correct answer. If one group finishes early with the correct answer, you might ask them to observe other groups, but they should be cautioned not to intervene in any way.

****

When all groups have reached consensus on their answer, the teacher should initiate (if the class has not already) a discussion about communication, focusing on such behaviors as the following:

1. Reacting negatively to the phrase "mathematical problem" and establishing artificial constraints.

2. Leaving the problem solving to "experts" (self-proclaimed or otherwise).

*A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training, Amy Zelmer, vol. 4. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: University of Alberta.

3. Adopting pressuring tactics in reaching consensus.

4. Revealing anxiety feelings generated by observing groups who had already reached the correct conclusion.

5. Using "teaching aids" in convincing others (scraps of paper, paper and pencil, real money).

6. Feeling distressed if the wrong conclusion was reached.

7. Using listening checks and other communications techniques.

8. Refusing to set aside personal opinion to reach consensus.

9. Using helping and hindering behaviors within the group.

Variation: Allow no audio/visual aids -- make the groups talk through the solution.

SHOE STORE PROBLEM

A man went into a shoe store to buy a $12 pair of shoes. He handed the clerk a $20 bill. It was early in the day, and the clerk didn't have any $1 bills. He took the $20 bill and went to the restaurant next door, where he exchanged it for 20 $1 bills. He then gave the customer his change. Later that morning the restaurant owner came to the clerk and said, "This is a counterfeit $20 bill." The clerk apologized profusely, and took back the phoney bill and gave the restaurant owner two good $10 bills. Not counting the cost of the shoes, how much money did the shoe store lose?

DECISION CHARTING*

Materials: chalkboard, chalk, paper, pencils

Procedure:

1. Divide the chalkboard into four columns. The first column is labeled "ranking," the second "goals," the third "options," and the fourth "option values."

2. With each class, select a decision area for study: to buy a car, to choose what to do after high school, to choose a course of study, etc.

3. The students brainstorm possible goals for that decision area, with the teacher recording items on the board in the second column.

4. Students are asked to rank the goals in order of importance to them, first individually on paper and then as a group. Record these in column 1.

5. The class brainstorms a list of options that might be available for each goal.

6. Those options that seem most useful are then selected for further work and are listed in column 3. The values inherent in each of these options are listed in column 4.

7. Now the decision makers have a great quantity of information organized in a meaningful fashion. By comparing the option values with the important goals, they can determine which of the available options is likely to prove most appropriate (see diagram below).

DECISION CHARTING

Decision: Buying a Car			
Ranking	Goals	Options	Option Values
1	Transportation	Economy car	Money, parking
2	Fun	Sports car	Impress others, have fun
4	Feeling of Importance		
5	Impress others	Fix up junked car	Fun to do
3	Make money with	Station wagon	Use to carry stuff
n	Etc.	Etc.	Etc.

* From Human Values in the Classroom, Robert C. Hawley and Isabel L. Hawley. New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1975.

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OPTIONS
ADAPTATION MANUAL

ADAPTING THE OPTIONS CURRICULUM:

A "HOW-TO" MANUAL

Rationale

Rural places are different from cities--as the 66 million people who live in them well know. Rural students, like students everywhere, need materials that confront their particular problems and that celebrate the special qualities of their ways of life. Unlike urban and suburban students, however, rural young people rarely have access to such materials. Commercial publishers generally do not find rural curriculums profitable, so they design materials for metropolitan areas and assume that rural schools will take what they can get. Further, even rurally oriented materials need to be adapted to particular rural regions, since the nonmetropolitan areas of our country have remained very different from one another, unlike cities and suburbs, which have become more and more alike. This makes life difficult for teachers, who constantly must adapt curriculums to the needs of particular groups of children, but who rarely have the training or the time to overhaul inflexible texts and materials to make them reflect local conditions and regional problems.

The OPTIONS curriculum has been designed to make that job easier. It is a career development/life management course with a general rural orientation. In addition, it has been designed to be adaptable. Many of the lessons draw on the students' own perceptions of the life around them; some require actual data gathering within the community before class discussions. A few lessons are so general that they transfer readily from one region to another. The rest have been adapted for use in five general areas of the country--the Northeast, the Southwest, the Appalachian South, the Midwest, and the

Northwest--and are further adaptable to specific States and localities. This manual describes in detail one tested way to manage that adaptation process.

Before You Begin

Adapting the OPTIONS curriculum requires no major technological equipment, no complex staff retraining, and no fancy new techniques. But, the process does have three requirements that are critical for successful local adaptation:

1) Time--The adaptation group must have a block of time set aside for completing the process. The entire adaptation can be done in one full work week (5 days). Individual half-day or full-day sessions are adequate, but we recommend that they be scheduled within the shortest possible time period since valuable time and enthusiasm can be lost if the work is spread out over several months.

2) Access to a typist--Certain pages will need to be retyped as modifications are made. The adaptation team itself can do this if sufficient time is set aside, but past adaptation groups have found professional typists more efficient.

3) Access to duplicating machinery--Both Teacher's Guide pages and Student Activity Sheets will need to be duplicated once they are revised and typed. A photocopier would make the pages look the most "professional," but a mimeograph machine or ditto machine would also serve the purpose.

A small additional complication is that Student Activity Sheets are color-coded, so that some of the duplication will need to be done on paper of various colors.

None of these requirements should present insurmountable barriers, but they must be considered before the adaptation team begins its work. If teachers are doing the adaptation, the school board might be willing to fund a week of work during vacation time. Or, an adaptation team could take on the project for recertification credit in States where possible. The administration might make available the services of a school or district secretary, or the business department of a local high school might assign the adaptation typing and duplication to a typing class or a student majoring in office skills. Paper and duplicating equipment are usually available within a district, but the adaptation team should reserve access to an adequate supply in advance.

The Task at Hand

1. Putting Together a Working Team

Although the OPTIONS curriculum could be adapted by a variety of people such as district administrators, community members, social service personnel, college students, or even high school students, most likely most of the working team will be local school personnel. The team can be organized in a variety of ways. If the OPTIONS course is to be offered in an interdisciplinary class, or if different departments want to use different sections of the curriculum, representatives from each of the disciplines should be on the team. For example, a good interdisciplinary team might consist of teachers from a high school's social studies, home economics, and business

departments plus a guidance counselor. If the course is to be taught in only one department, the working team should probably be drawn from several schools, since few rural high schools have enough personnel in one subject area to form a working team. An alternative is to form a single-school team that includes local administrators, community members and, perhaps, some interested (and mature) students. We have found that five people make the best adaptation team: with five, the work can be distributed evenly but the group never becomes unwieldy.

2. The Preadaptation Session

This meeting should be a short planning and team-building session no more than 2 hours long, run by a team coordinator designated in advance. The coordinator should begin the meeting with a team-building activity. This can be as simple as asking team members to introduce themselves (if they don't already know one another) and to make a statement about why they are interested in this curriculum, or it can be as complex as a full-scale discussion of the needs of young people in the area. If time permits, the group can read the general introduction to the curriculum and discuss the applicability of the concepts presented there to the local area. The coordinator should be able to accurately assess the exercise that would be most effective with a particular group.

The coordinator should then work out a schedule for the workdays to which all team members can commit themselves. The coordinator should also describe the kinds of work that need to be done and the daily schedule (see the sample schedule on pgs. 6-10).

The coordinator should conclude by passing out copies of the OPTIONS curriculum adapted for your general region of the country. These are working

copies which should be treated as draft materials by the team, that is, the team members should feel free to scribble in the margins, cross out words, and add ideas. The coordinator should stress that the whole point of adaptation is to adapt. None of the authors of the curriculum considers any of it sacred writ. It is the job of the adaptation team to suit the materials to the students in their locality.

3. Workday Scheduling

Workdays operate best when everyone knows what to expect in advance. An effective general structure might look like this:

3 hours -- team work

1 hour -- a meal and break

3 hours -- individual research and unit work

4. Team Roles and Responsibilities

Workdays run most smoothly when the least possible time is spent reshuffling tasks. We recommend the following procedure, which is simple, straightforward, and fairly equitable:

a. The coordinator readies all materials and assignments before each meeting, leads discussions, and oversees typing and duplicating of materials.

b. A recorder is appointed for each workday on a rotating basis. The recorder prepares and submits a copy of meeting notes and curriculum changes to the coordinator.

c. Team members are expected to read each unit in advance and to come to each workday with suggestions for adaptation. The workday schedule cannot include both initial readings and sound adaptation.

5. Structuring the Workdays

Workday #1:

a. The coordinator presents the general agenda for the day and for the rest of the sessions. Each team member is assigned recorder duty, research tasks (see Appendix A), and, if necessary, typing or duplicating duties.

b. The coordinator leads a general discussion of the curriculum (which everyone will have read), focusing on questions such as*:

1. Do place names, people's names, occupations, life styles, cultural patterns, economics, politics, and sex role expectations reflect our area? What changes can be made to make these more relevant to our students so that they can more easily identify with the materials?

2. Are the activities appropriate for our young people? If now, how can they be changed?

3. Are the suggested teaching techniques valid and appropriate? If not, how can they be changed?

4. Should more male examples be used? Where is this appropriate?

c. The team addresses the key issue of <u>adaptation level</u>. There are two basic ways in which the OPTIONS curriculum can be adapted. Level One is the simplest: it involves simple substitution of words and occasionally phrases. For this level, you may want to change the names

*These questions were devised by the OPTIONS New Mexico site coordinator, Carolyn Smiley-Marquez. The coordinator in a different area might want to focus on different issues of similar concern.

of people, places, and occupations (for a more complete list, see Appendix B). You will also want to substitute local colloquialisms for those in your regional adaptation. This kind of adaptation is essential. We have found that adolescents, especially rural adolescents, identify more strongly with situations and people very much like themselves. A sample of Level One adaptation can be found in Appendix B.

At the other end of the adaptation scale is complete case revision. Level Two adaptation is difficult but can also be rewarding, since it gives the participants a deeper sense of the dynamics of one locality. For a Level Two adaptation, the team identifies the kind of problem that needs to be presented and then builds a new case around it, describing the people and situations common to your area. In this adaptation, you might change the life style of the participants, their work and family balance, and their culturally determined attitudes. This adaptation is not essential, but it does add depth to the curriculum. An example of Level Two adaptation is also given in Appendix B.

d. If time permits, individual team members begin work on the research tasks.

Workday #2:

a. The coordinator outlines the work plan for the day.

b. The team adapts Unit I, going through it page by page, compiling suggestions for specific changes. Once all changes have been suggested, the team (with the help of the recorder for that day) discusses the charges that seem to localize the curriculum best and makes those changes. It is important for the group to achieve consensus on changes to ensure the credibility of the adaptation.

If the team decides to do a Level Two adaptation of some materials, one or two people should be assigned to that task. Generally, people with some flair for writing and/or an intimate and long-term knowledge of the locality will do the best job of full-scale revision. People doing such revisions should probably be relieved of research tasks or recorder duty to spend a good deal of time on revision. Writing is always more time consuming than anyone expects.

c. Once the Unit I changes have been made or assigned, the team works on individual research tasks or Level Two adaptations.

d. The recorder makes a final copy of all agreed-upon Unit I revisions for the typist. The coordinator double-checks and proofreads the recorder's changes to ensure that an accurate copy goes to the typist. (N.B. Someone must check the typist's work as well. It is very confusing when inaccurate pages go to the teachers and students.)

Workday #3:

a. The coordinator goes over the work plan for the day.

b. The team reviews, alters, and/or approves any Level Two adaptations that were completed during the previous session.

c. The team adapts Unit II, following the pattern established for Unit I.

d. Once the Unit II changes have been made, the team continues research tasks and Level Two adaptation.

e. The coordinator and recorder prepare Unit II and any remaining Unit I work for the typist following the pattern established for Unit I.

f. The coordinator prepares to act as monitor for the simulation game which will be played by the team on workday #4. The monitor's instructions are attached to the Game materials (Unit III).

Workday #4:

a. The coordinator goes over the work plan for the day and leads the review and revision of Level Two adaptations completed during the previous session.

b. The team adapts Unit III (excluding the Game) following the usual pattern.

c. The team plays the Game, noting places where adaptations need to be made.

d. After the Game, the team reviews all Game materials, including those that may not have been used during that particular round, and adapts them.

e. The coordinator and recorder prepare materials for the typist, following the usual pattern.

f. Other team members complete research tasks or work on Level Two adaptations. The research tasks should be completed, written up, and prepared by the coordinator for the typist by the end of this session.

Workday #5:

a. The coordinator goes over the work plan for the day, including review and revision of Level Two adaptations completed rhe previous session.

b. The team adapts Unit IV, following the usual pattern. Because this unit is very long and very amenable to localization, this will take more of the session.

c. The coordinator and recorder prepare materials for the typist, following the usual pattern.

d. The coordinator leads the team in an evaluation and closure activity.

6. Getting It Together

Once the adaptation process has been completed, someone still has to see that the final product is typed, proofread, duplicated, and distributed. The coordinator must make sure that these tasks are assigned and completed. The group must reconvene to integrate the Student Activity Sheets and Teacher's Guide pages into the curriculum copies. A final gathering over a pot-luck supper might be appropriate to celebrate the completion of the adapted curriculum, now ready for classroom use.

A Final Note

Although the OPTIONS curriculum has been designed as a coherent 9-to-12-week course suitable for home economics, social studies, or guidance classes, it can be useful in other ways. The units and many of the lessons can stand on their own, with minimal modification. For example, a high school social studies teacher plans to use Unit I as the introduction to a course on the American character. A college home economics course will make Unit IV part of a home management class. Other ways to use the different units are suggested to us constantly--feel free to make up your own. The OPTIONS curriculum is "teacher-ready," which we believe is the opposite of "teacher-proof." It is ready for teachers to use however and wherever they can for the better education of young rural women and men.

Appendix A: Research Tasks

There are many areas in the curriculum where substitution of local circumstances will improve the lessons. The list that follows notes those materials that must be adapted for local use unless the regional version precisely suits your State and community. Each team member should be encouraged to select the task that most interests him or her. If there are no volunteers for some tasks, the coordinator must then assign them. Each team member is expected to locate the required information from an accurate source and then to revise the curriculum materials accordingly.

Research Tasks

Unit I: "What Is Your Local Area?" (optional activity, lesson #1)

"Lives of People in This Area" (tape cassette)

This is a long job that involves locating people in the community who will record their brief life histories. The person assigned this job must locate a person in the appropriate age group, tape the history, and give the tape to the coordinators so that it can be transcribed, given the proper marginal annotations, and duplicated as a Student Activity Sheet. A simpler alternative is to get a person with a recognizably regional accent to read the transcripts that already exist.

Unit III: "Assessment Skills: People, Places, and Services" (LAP)

Unit IV: "Your Record and Your Rights": school board policy (Stephanie, Lesson #1)

-Updates (if any) on employment laws (Stephanie, Lesson #4)

-State and local welfare guidelines (Evelyn, SAS #1, 1a, Lesson #1)

-"Vocational Training Opportunities": transcript and tapes (Evelyn, Lesson #5)

- Federal food stamps: check for changes (Terri, SAS #3, alternate Lesson #4)
- Budget plan: update (Terri, alternate Lesson #4, #5)

Information Sources for Research Tasks

Employment Security Service

State Employment Office

Homemakers

Social workers/district office, Department of Social Welfare

Home-school coordinators

State Department of Education

School personnel: superintendent
principal
guidance counselors
teachers

Commission on the Status of Women

Bureau of Statistics

Vocational coordinators

Appendix B: Sample Adaptations

Level One

To make Level One changes, simply replace words and phrases with local references and wordings--the more locally accurate, the better. Just watch out for potentially libelous statements. Level One changes usually include: types of first names, kinds of jobs, names of towns and cities, typical forms of recreation, references to stores, newspapers, schools, and other institutions, teenage hangouts, current dress fashions, local slang, and local landmarks or events. Here is a sample of the Northeast curriculum with the adaptations for the Appalachian South in parentheses.

Case Study #2, Unit I, Lesson 10

Marianne Clark (Debbie Foust) learned at 9:15 a.m. on a blustery March (beautiful June) morning that she was a widow. Her husband Jim, 27, had been killed in a car accident on his way to work. Marianne (Debbie) and Jim had been married less than 2 years, and Marianne (Debbie) was expecting their first baby. Before marriage, she had worked as a sales clerk in Rich's (Miller's) department store.

After the first shock of grief had passed, Marianne totaled up (Debbie added up) her financial resources. There was an insurance policy for $10,000, $762 in a savings account, and $147.69 in a checking account. Because of the baby, Marianne (Debbie) could collect a small monthly sum in Social Security benefits.

Marianne (Debbie) realized that her resources (money) would not last long after the baby was born if she did not get a job. And what would she

do with the baby while she worked? Jim's mother offered to take care of the baby, but Marianne (Debbie) intensely disliked (did not like) her mother-in-law. Her pastor (preacher) suggested adoption because, he said, it is not as easy for a woman with a child to marry again as it is for a childless woman (woman without kids), and most day-care centers do not accept small infants.

Level Two

Level Two adaptations generally involve developing a case that is very different from the original. In the examples given below, the Midwest adaptation team took a general concept and built a new case to illustrate it. The curriculum required a brief case that described a pressing problem that disrupted a woman's otherwise comfortable life. For the Northeast development team, adolescent drug use was the obvious choice; the Nebraska team felt that a financial crisis was more appropriate. It is important to note that although the "stories" in the cases are entirely different, they serve an identical function in the curriculum.

Northeastern Adaptation (Unit III, Lesson 3)

Pamela and Bill Logan had just bought a new home in a nice neighborhood. Their three children had begun to make friends immediately, and the whole family was glad they had moved. Their oldest daughter had found a nice boyfriend, and the younger girl was the star of the field hockey team. Then, everything fell apart.

Two months after the move Pamela was cleaning her son's closet. Behind some old boots, she found a small plastic bag full of marijuana cigarettes.

Pam had heard that drugs were a problem in the new schools her children were attending, but she had never dreamed her kids would try drugs. All her delight in her new home evaporated. What should she do? Should she confront and punish her son? Get all three kids together and talk to them about the drug problem? Maybe she should try to talk with other mothers and then organize an effort to clean up the schools. Whatever she decided to do, it must be done soon.

Midwestern Adaptation (Unit III, Lesson #3)

Karen and Al were among those few people privileged to live a "perfect" life. At 19, Karen married Al, a boy from the neighboring ranch. They assumed control of a 500-cow unit on the ranch. They built a nice brick home overlooking the meadow and spent the first 20 years of their married life raising a family of one girl and two boys and improving the ranch operation. The family was close. Karen loved the serenity of the ranch and the challenge of living 60 miles from town.

It had been a comfortable life--materially and personally. Now that "comfort" was being threatened. With cattle prices too low to cover expenses and college costs for the two boys, Karen and Al realized that some changes had to be made.

Several alternatives seemed possible. Karen and her daughter Margaret could live in town during the week so Karen could get a job and save the expense of having Margaret drive to school. Al could order cattle and work Saturdays at the livestock auction. Or, they could sell their equipment and cattle to pay their debts, lease the ranch, and both take jobs in town.

Each plan involved radical changes in the family. Karen would like to do something herself to contribute financially to her family and help to preserve their life style.